

and the Liberal government, because the Catholic members of the party thought proper, without asking the permission of the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace), to use the liberty guaranteed under British rule to citizens of all creeds and nationalities to take the proper means established by their Church to settle a question of religious difference.

There was another question which the hon. gentleman thought proper to bring into the discussion. He speaks of a brochure that was distributed in 1896 concerning the three millions of dollars which appeared in the budget of the Conservative government for buying guns, carbines and other weapons. Sir, knowing as you do, the feelings that I entertain on the question of war in general, you will not be surprised to hear me say that, if all the words contained in that brochure are not right, at least the spirit is not wrong, from my point of view. Sir, the hon. gentleman tried to say that the Liberals who issued that brochure in the province of Quebec entertained disloyal feelings toward England because they saw in the buying of these weapons an effort on the part of the Conservative government to bring Canada into such relations with Great Britain as would force Canada to act with England in all her wars. I have never read the brochure referred to; I did not have it distributed in my county. The position I took in my county was this: I am opposed to militarism for Canada. I consider Canada a pacific country, a country happily situated far from the rivalries which always threatened to destroy the peace of Europe and bring into armed conflict the great powers of the world. It is fortunate for us that our country is so situated, that we may invite the peaceful people of all nationalities to come and settle here. I was in favour of the policy of conciliation, not only for the races that live in Canada, but also for the nations of the wide world. Therefore, I did not think proper to approve of a policy that meant that we were going to war. I am speaking now of my personal position. But certainly, when that brochure was written and circulated and when the general elections came on, there was never any idea generally propounded in this country, either by one party or the other, that Canada was to be an armed nation. Therefore, I say, that it was proper, at least it was open, for any candidate, either Liberal or Conservative, to declare himself opposed to any military

preparations for this country, to declare himself opposed to any policy that would bring Canada into closer relationship with Great Britain, so far as military operations were concerned—and for any candidate taking such a position did not lay himself open to a justifiable accusation of disloyalty to Great Britain.

I am not going to discuss that point now, because we shall have another occasion to discuss it at length, along with the other points that have been mentioned. I merely want to say that times change, and when we wish to criticise members' words and acts we must place ourselves at the time when they spoke and acted. I say that at the time that brochure was written and published nobody could accuse any man of disloyalty to England because he was opposed to Canada preparing for war. Times have changed, as we have often been told by hon. gentlemen opposite, and at the present time a different spirit has developed in this country. At that time it was perfectly legitimate—I do not say to use all the words that may have been used in that brochure—but to entertain those ideas and to speak upon those issues.

Now, I have spoken at much greater length than I had intended, but I have been compelled to do so by the lengthy remarks of the hon. gentleman himself. But to sum up my argument, let me say that the hon. gentleman has no right, based upon anything which may have been said by hon. gentlemen on this side, to accuse of disloyalty any French Canadian British subjects in this country. We have a right to understand and to interpret the constitution of this country according to our judgment, and we have a right to do so without being charged with disloyalty. We have a right to interpret the British constitution, and the Canadian constitution, according to our judgment, without laying ourselves open to the charge of disloyalty because our interpretation differs from that of the Tory party. There was no occasion for charging us with entertaining different views from those our words express, there was no occasion at all for insinuating that we were acting as Frenchmen in sympathy with France, instead of as British subjects. I say that the hon. gentleman opposite having uttered those words, that I have quoted, he cannot now complain if the press of the country interpret his words as an attempt to raise the race and religious cry in Canada.